

**Shepherd Cemetery District Board Meeting Minutes**  
**May 16 - August 31, 2020**

**Members present on e-mail/texts:** Peggy McSweyn, Brenda Emerick

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and recommendations for social distancing, our business has been conducted via phone texts and e-mails between April 1 and August 31, 2020.

The minutes from the previous "meeting" were shared via e-mail. On 5/18/2020, Peggy made a couple of updates to the minutes through mid-May and approved them with the changes.

**Financial Report:** We have been receiving the monthly Trial Balances from the county via e-mail. As of June 22, 2020:

County Funds: \$17,824.35

Checking Account: \$4,112.37

Currently all major expenditures have been processed and paid. They included:

New Siding on Cemetery building - insurance claim for hail damage

New siding for well house to match the building - County funds

New utility shed, 12x24 - Old Hickory Sheds - County funds

**Projects:** Cleary is scheduled to replace the hail damaged siding on our main building and well house in July-August, which is the closest they can tell us right now. (They completed the work in early June).

Peggy suggested that we purchase a shed from Old Hickory Sheds in the Heights. This would be less expensive than adding onto our current building, but would free up a lot of space and keep more of our equipment dry and secure. Peggy got a quote for a 12 x 24 building and the cost is \$6,775.00 delivered and set in place. It would have a dirt floor for now. It has a urethane coated finish which has a much longer life than regular paint. Brenda agreed the shed was a great idea so Peggy will order and pay a down payment in order to lock in the price. We will place it after the main building has been resided. (The shed has been installed).

In April, Peggy heard that some of the county funds may be seized to cover unforeseen costs due to Covid-19. Jennifer Jones (who has taken Judy Horton's place at the County) assured Peggy that our funds are safe.

Peggy told our caretaker, Jim to start working in April. We have allocated 400 hours for him and we will be willing to go up to that for him to get the work done. (Peggy sent a requisition to the County to pay Jim for 10 hours in April at a total invoice of \$120). Jim and Robert McSweyn cleaned up the overhanging trees and debris along the north fence. Quite a big job, but huge improvement to the aesthetics and ease of upkeep.

As of April, we couldn't fertilize the cemeteries as we don't have a cart attached to the mower yet. We need to work on that as the fertilizer spreader at the cemetery is made for our Walker mower but we need some brackets. Peggy told Jim to go get them, as they shouldn't cost more than a couple \$100 dollars. If that doesn't work out, Peggy suggested that we get at least one application of fertilizer from TruGreen at a cost of \$453.00. Brenda agreed to this suggestion.

Brenda reached out to Erica Wiley at the County Commissioners' office to learn how/if they advertise board openings. We have not had anyone volunteer, and we need a third member. Erica showed Brenda where they post board openings on the Yellowstone County Website. Our open position is indeed posted. Brenda's term is up at the end of June 2020. She is in the process of re-applying to the board for a second 2-year term. Peggy will ask Kelly Barkhuff if she is interested in joining the Board.

Jim Hinkle said he wants to buy a plot for him and his wife, Linda near his father's as there is one left. He told Robert McSweyn that Bob Wolske told him his mother could be buried as cremains with his Dad - but there are already 2 buried in that plot. Jim's Dad and brother. We only allow 2 cremains per plot and Robert told him that but... Jim may still be thinking that they can do what Bob said. In the meantime Peggy is 'holding' the close plot for them because they will need it for Jim's mother. They have to buy a new plot for Jim's mother and then one for themselves. They wanted the last close one for themselves but they will have to pick one several rows over.

We need to pay Robert McSweyn quite a bit as he worked at the cemetery prior to the re-siding to level out the back around the building so Cleary could get a big piece of equipment in there. He and Jim hauled lots of dirt, which was deposited at Peggy's house as we had no other place to take it. Also he had to take up his big loader to dig out the area for the shed which he did a great job on. So we need to pay something for the cost of the machine. He and Jim had to disconnect the electricity and water pipes into the well house and will reinstall all that this week. Robert is also going to use his big truck and haul in gravel. We need it behind the building where the shed will go and along the sides where the big lift Cleary used chewed up all the ground and old gravel that was there. (It is a mess but they don't have to fix it because it is the cost of getting the job done. And it did not help that it had rained some and made it so soft.) It might take 3 loads. We will pay for that from the checking account. Should not cost more than \$150.00. Brenda approved of all of this. We should get depreciation of \$3,728 from the insurance company which will go in our checking account and boost it to a good level.

One side of the main building needs a rain gutter. It is the side facing into the cemetery. The rain from the roof washes over the gravel on that side and makes the ground very soft and muddy. Peggy will get a quote for rain gutters. (The bid is \$590.00 from Big Sky Gutterworks and includes gutters on the new shed as well.) Robert and Jim plan to bury the downspout so that it flows into a French drain installed along the cemetery grass. Brenda agreed to move ahead with Big Sky Gutterworks.

A situation arose of alcoholic beverages in the cemetery and containers filling the garbage can. There was also dog poop in the grounds. We ordered and installed 2 signs on the gate of Shepherd Cemetery. One that states 'Alcohol and Drugs not Allowed on this Property' and another 'Pets Not Allowed in the Cemetery'. To date we have not seen any alcohol containers in the cemetery.

There was an issue with the plots that were assigned to the Morton sisters. Sharon Wolske had recorded Charlotte Morton in plot P-12 and Loraine Morton in P-11. However, the stone is inscribed with Charlotte in P-11 so we had to correct that in all our records and send a corrected plot record sheet to the county GIS office. In future, we need to check the plot as given to us by the funeral home with our records and possibly check to see if a stone exists and is already inscribed.

Currently Peggy McSweyn is updating the cemetery maps, rotary file and the plot books. Maps are marked to indicate if a burial has been done in the plot and the files are updated with burial information. As of June 22, 2020 we are up-to-date. She is working on a list of all the Shepherd Cemetery plots, with names on the list, whether the grave is occupied or not. She will make a quick reference list of all the plots in the cemetery and if there are empty plots near family members. We often get requests to know if there are any left near family.

6/23 - Peggy shared an updated Rules & Regulations for 2020. Some of the updates include:

No benches, no plots sold outside the plotted boundaries, no more memorial trees

Monuments (includes stones/engraved rocks) must be on a concrete base

Peggy suggested that we purchase ramps for the new shed. Now that it is up, the caretaker says ramps would really help to move equipment in and out of the shed. Little Guy Sheds/Old Hickory has a set for \$575.00. (Kit #4, 6' bar, 3 panels). Brenda agreed to have Peggy get an invoice and send it to the County for payment. Jim will pick up the ramps and install them.

Jares Fence came by and measured the fence on the west side of the cemetery to replace it with chain link fence. (322 ft. of 5 ft. tall chain link fence to complete the fence around our cemetery). Sean at Jares Fence gave us a bid for \$6,759.00. This quote seemed high to Peggy, so she asked if it included old fence removal. Jares said the removal was worth only about \$389.00. Peggy then contacted Frontier Fence and they gave her a 'quote' of \$4,850.00 without the old fence removal, which would be an additional \$809.00. This is about \$1,900.00 less than Jares, which did include fence removal. We will wait until we get the financial report from the County to determine where our funding sits before moving ahead with the fence project.

On August 6, 2020, both Peggy and Brenda received an e-mail from Kevan Bryan regarding the Shepherd Mill Levy.

"August 5, 2020

Dear Board Members:

I've computed your district's maximum mill authority for FY21 to be:

Mill maximum for FY21:	2.22 mills
Multiplied by Taxable Valuation FY21:	<u>\$ 6,463</u> per mill
Maximum FY21 tax revenue	\$14,348
Plus State entitlement revenue	<u>\$ 2,523</u> (Not dependent on levy amount)
Maximum revenue available	\$16,871

Last year's maximum levy was 2.18 mills, which set a revenue maximum of \$13,969 in tax revenue plus \$2,440 in revenue from the State for a total of \$16,409. Your board approved 2.18 mills.

Under current law, if your board decides to levy less than the maximum, the maximum authority would still be available in future years. This allows for a levy reduction and returning to the higher levy in a later year.

The Board of County Commissioners asked that your Board let me know it's written recommendation for next year's levy no later than August 14, 2020. Please call me at my direct line at 406-256-2793 for any questions or comments. An email to my address located below is preferable."

Brenda and Peggy agreed to accept the higher mills at 2.22. Peggy informed Kevan Bryan of our decision.

On August 28, 2020, Peggy received a nice e-mail introduction from Anja Silvesan. She lives in Shepherd, works for the County and has been appointed as our third board member. We will convene a meeting at the Cemetery building on September 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:00pm. We will give Anja a tour, introduce her to what we do and conduct a regular business meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Brenda Emerick, Secretary